Lifting Ban on Non-Iodised Salt

680. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Experts concerned over lifting of ban on non-iodised salt", appearing in the Asian Age dated 17th June, 2000;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that, as mentioned in the news-item, the Prime Minister has agreed to lift ban on the sale of non-iodised salt in the country; and

(d) the reasons for disregarding the viewpoints of prominent scientific experts and health specialists all of whom have advised against the ban being lifted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no ban on manufacture of non-iodised salt except the restriction on sale for direct human consumption. The notification issued on 10.5.2000 seeks public comments on a proposal to withdraw this restriction so that both iodised and non-iodised salt can be made available and the public can make an 'informed choice'.

(c) and (d) No decision has yet been taken on the notification. Comments supporting and opposing the draft rules have been received from the public, including prominent scientific experts. All opinions received in the matter will be carefully considered before a final decision is taken.

Withdrawal of Iodisation of Salt

681. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) when iodisation of salt was made compulsory;